# Diversity Newsletter

Topics for Teachers

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Ministry of Education

**Spring 2010 Issue 2**

**Welcome** to the spring 2010 edition of **Diversity Newsletter:** *Topics for Teachers.*

***Staying on track*** is the theme of this edition. To support you in doing just that, we offer examples of proven practice, comprehensive planning tools, and new resources.

To help meet the diverse needs of students consider exploring principles of Universal Design (UDL). Whether you use technology or not, the principles of UDL have the potential to transform the learning environment in your classroom.

Please email ideas for future topics to EDUC.DiversityandEquity@gov.bc.ca

*Susan Kennedy*
Executive Director
Diversity and Equity and Early Learning

## Meeting Everyone's Needs: How can you do it?

The diversity in British Columbia's classrooms today brings both challenges and opportunities for educators. Differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners is one approach to address this diversity. In differentiated instruction teachers adapt instruction and assessment to address the needs of learners. The British Columbia Teacher's Federation website provides a number of ideas and resources to assist teachers in differentiating instruction. See the BCTF Teaching to Diversity site.

The practice of using universal design is an approach to meeting diverse needs that is gaining attention world-wide. Often called UDL (universal design for learning), it is not a set methodology, but rather a set of principles. To learn more about UDL, check out the website of the Centre for Applies Special Technology (CAST), with ideas about how to incorporate UDL approaches into teaching and learning, especially for students with disabilities. This site features a number of helpful resources, including two free online UDL modules for teachers.

Addressing the diversity challenge by providing flexible learning materials and assessment is well established teaching practice, and incorporating UDL approaches can further enrich the learning experiences of all our students.

*"Students are more engaged and make more rapid progress. Bright students are no longer bored, and struggling students are finding learning more accessible—and hence their sense of self-efficacy is rising. In response, "I see veteran teachers becoming energized and new teachers becoming enormously excited."*
*-Susan Demirsky* Allan

For more information about UDL visit www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

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# Universal Design for Learning

## *UDL for the Technologically Challenged*

Consider low tech. approaches to UDL.

**Multiple Methods of Representation:**
- color coding
- graphic organizers
- text magnifier
- role play
- sound bites
- outlines
- guest speakers
- interviews
- variety of groupings
- visual cues
- provide examples and non-examples

**Multiple Methods of Expression:**
- peer tutoring
- poster story
- selecting examples
- provide frequent oral/written feedback
- chunking information
- prepare a slideshow
- build a model
- dramatization

**Multiple Methods of Engagement:**
- provide choice of materials and modes
- family/peer involvement
- provide choice of projects; interest-related

Universal design is a framework for delivering curricula that enables all individuals to gain knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for learning. It is the process of building-in rather than adding-on accessibility and support for diverse learning needs.

UDL is an educational approach taken from the world of architecture. Think about ramps, curb cuts and closed-caption technology; initially created for people with special needs but now commonly used by everyone.

UDL frames a systematic approach to setting goals, choosing or creating flexible materials and assessing students. Materials can vary from high-tech SMARTBoards to low-tech graphic organizers. This approach assumes that students with varying needs will be involved in learning and that the goals, instructional practice, materials and assessment need to address diversity.

There are three primary principles of UDL:

1. Multiple means of representation, to give diverse learners options for acquiring information and knowledge
2. Multiple means of action and expression, to provide learners option for demonstrating what they know
3. Multiple means of engagement, to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation.

This built-in flexibility provides a wider range of options for students to choos from; meaning the curriculum adapts t the student rather than the other way around.

In the BCUDL Project, pilot schools received release time, UDL toolkits, onsite and online training. During the year, teams designed, taught and contributed UDL lessons to the BC UDL Learning Object Repository. Have a look at what teachers have created at www.setbc.org

*"UDL is good for students because it reduces frustration previously experienced with using inflexible print materials. When teachers provided flexible materials, they found students with behavior problems required fewer interventions and teacher assistants in the classroom. They found fewer students needing separate, time-consuming accommodations, and that students who had not worked independently before were able to learn to work independently with Kurzweil to support them rather than a one-on-one adult."* C.McAvoy and B.Standeven

**Learn more about UDL at:**
www.setbc.org
www.CAST.org
www.patinsproject.com/universal_design_for_learning_project.htm
www.arc-bc.org
BCTF: Teaching to Diversity website

# Universal Design for Learning Planning Tool

| Step | Task | Guiding Question |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Set goals** | Establish Context | How can I maximize student growth by meeting the students where they are in their learning process? |
| | Align to Learning Outcomes | How can the tasks I assign and the objectives I set align to the provincial learning outcomes? |
| **2. Analyze Status** | Identify methods, materials, and means of assessment | What materials, approaches, and forms of assessment can I use to provide access for all students? |
| | Identify barriers | What are the methods and materials I may use that can lead to missed opportunities unless I adapt them to meet the needs of all learners? |
| **3. Apply UDL** | Identify UDL materials and methods | What interesting, engaging and accessible materials and methods should I consider? |
| | Write UDL based lesson plan | Have I varied choices, expectations and requirements for student responses? |
| **4. Teach UDL Lesson** | Evaluate success | Have I maximized the learning for all my students? What worked? What didn't work? |
| | Revise lesson/unit. | What could I do next time? |

**Examples of Assessment Activity Possibilities:**

| **Kinesthetic:** | **Oral:** |
|---|---|
| ☐ Demonstration<br>☐ Diorama/toolkit<br>☐ Display<br>☐ Dramatization/dance<br>☐ Experiment<br>☐ Map<br>☐ Model or carving | ☐ Audio recording<br>☐ Debate/critique<br>☐ Documentary<br>☐ Interview<br>☐ Oral report<br>☐ Commentary<br>☐ Small group discussion |
| **Visual:** | **Written:** |
| ☐ Brochure<br>☐ Cross section<br>☐ Flow chart<br>☐ Graph/pictograph/chart<br>☐ Information table<br>☐ Poster<br>☐ Timeline | ☐ Booklet<br>☐ Dictionary<br>☐ Editorial<br>☐ News article<br>☐ Research report<br>☐ Descriptive essay<br>☐ Poetry |

# Inclusion, Integration and Policy

Often the terms "inclusion" and "integration" are used interchangeably when discussing programming options for students.

*Inclusion* describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion combines meaningful participation with the promotion of interaction with others.

*Integration* is one of the strategies used to achieve inclusion.

*Integration* is the placement of a student with special needs with other students who do not have special needs and providing necessary accommodations to enable success.

British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system. Although Boards of Education should strive toward integration as the standard for a student with special needs, inclusion may also be supported by a number of other strategies. The appropriate use of resource rooms, self-contained classes, community-based programs or specialized settings may be employed depending on what is necessary to meet the educational or social needs of the student with special needs or the educational needs of others.

The principle of "placement in the most enabling learning environment" should apply when deciding the extent to which an individual student is integrated into the regular classroom.

Whether a student with special needs is fully integrated or not, the student still needs as many opportunities as possible to be a fully participating member of a community of learners.

**Students with Special Needs Grow Through Inclusive Life Skills Courses in SD# 19.**

Population Focus: Grade 9-12 students with significant special needs, such as intellectual disabilities.

Courses are taught by the regular staff such as the shop teacher and the home economics teacher.

Students learn skills such as bicycle repair, woodworking, cooking, home repairs as well as social skills and self-confidence.

For many students this is the only class where they function as regular students, with support coming from their peers and their teachers.

www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/downloads/adminfo_pdf/Adminfo0609web.pdf

Read the Ministry of Education's policy on inclusion in *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm

# Instructional Support Planning Tools

for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disabilities, Physical Disability/Chronic Health, Behaviour/Mental Illness

The Ministry of Education has developed four unique tools to facilitate a planning process and to determine the instructional support needs of students across critical domains (communication, social/emotional functioning, self determination/independent living, and intellectual functioning.) These tools are a new, research-based approach that has been created as an educational model for instructional and support planning.

Each tool looks at a number of domains, and provides descriptive language regarding what may be viewed as mild, moderate and complex needs in each domain. The tools are meant to be used to develop an accurate picture of a student's ability across domains. This picture can then be used to develop targeted goals in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and to determine appropriate programs and services based on his or her functional needs.

The tools are best used when they draw on the expertise of the school based team, parents and other professionals who may be involved in the IEP development process. Information vital to understanding a student's ability will also be drawn from a variety of other sources, including assessment reports and other information in a student's file.

Used in a team context, the tools provide an opportunity to develop consensus regarding the functional needs of a student in each domain.

Schools using these tools report that they provide: a systematic review of a student's instructional and support needs; a direct linkage to IEP development; a common language for describing student strengths and needs; a framework for positive discussions with parents; and a significant time- saver for all who use them.

Each of the instructional planning and support tools has been created through a piloting process involving four school districts. Piloting helped each district learn valuable information about their students and an appreciation for each tool's ability to stimulate conversation and teamwork. While districts noted it takes time to use the tool, this was because "...it kept creating such important professional discussions about the child!"

**Web links to the Tools:**

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder planning tool:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/asd_instr_supp_plan_tool.pdf

Students with Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health Impairments planning tool:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/physical_dphysical functioningisabilties_chronic_health.pdf

Students with Behaviour/Mental Illness planning tool:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/behaviour_intervention.pdf

Students with Learning Disabilities planning tool:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/ld_instructional_support_tool.pdf

# Spotlight

## ... on Ministry resources

Did you know that there are a number of helpful resources for teachers of students with special needs?
Check them out at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sped_res_docs.htm

*New* IEP Guide:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iepssn.htm
*New* Diabetes Resource:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/awareness/39.htm
Special Education training modules:
www.bc-case.org/learning.shtml
Instructional Support Planning Tools: See page 4 for links
POPFASD: www.fasdoutreach.ca
POPARD: www.autismoutreach.ca
SETBC: www.setbc.org
PRCVI: www.prcvi.org
PISP: www.pisp.ca
Deafblind Outreach: www.sd38.bc.ca/BCDeafblindOUtreach
Deaf Outreach: www.deafoutreachbc.ca
Auditory Outreach: www.auditoryoutreach.ca
BCTF Teaching to Diversity Website

## ... on district practices

Do you know about some of the outstanding things going on in the province?

If you have something you'd like highlighted in *"the spotlight"* email us at EDUC.DiversityandEquity@gov.bc.ca

## Bright Lights Theatre Lights Up the Stage!

Mount Baker Senior Secondary School in SD No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) has developed two courses for students with disabilities: one in technology and one in drama. Both courses combine to give students with and without special needs an opportunity to build not only an entire theatre production but to create a community that celebrates each individual for their talents and positive attributes. Bright Lights Theatre, in partnership with Cranbrook Society for Community Living, has lit up the stage with two black light theatre productions, both to rave reviews.

*"The great thing about being involved in this project is that we learn so much about the students – it's powerful to see their growth....We learn so much about them, but we also start to learn about ourselves as well." The Kootenay Advertiser*